Corisco West Africa Sept 7th 1850

My Dear Brethern
of the Soc. of Inquiry,

It is but a short time since we enjoyed your favored society. We are now upon the shores of a foreign land. In sitting down to write to you, how can our minds and hearts, be otherwise than crowded with the most delightful associations, and tender emotions! We are sure that we are remembered in many of your prayers, and though far separated we are often brought nigh to the same throne of grace. This union we have through him, who laid down his life for us, that we all might be one. In the spirit of a deep interest in the kingdom of Christ, you have requested us to write to you fully concerning our mission here, and it is with much pleasure we comply with your request.

In answering the questions of the Corresponding Sec. we shall be brief.

And first, in reference to the voyage, we have not much experience, that would be of any consequence to one coming after us. Our Captain was a kind and Gentlemanly man, did had made every preparation for the

Mr Wilson and his wife have lived in Africa nearly 18 years, and though their health is ordinarily good yet they have frequent attacks of chill and fever.*

Whether our island home, to which we have lately come, will prove an exception to these statements, we are not yet prepared to say. We have enjoyed thus far better health here, than when we were living at Gaboon.

There is nothing, I suppose, in which we were so much disappointed on coming to Africa as in reference to the beauty and fertility of the country. As we sailed down the coast we were much surprised to find so beautiful a country. In many places the coast rises in abrupt ~~cliffs~~ hills which can be seen far at sea, and often, as we approached the land, we beheld their sumits crowned with a luxuriant vegetation. The coast-soil, though sandy, is very productive. I have yet to see the first barren spot in africa. Every inch is claimed by some useful plants of greater or smaller growth. The principal food of the natives is plantains, cassada, yams, sweet potatoes, pea-nuts, &c with the fruits. Almost all the tropical fruits do well but the natives do not cultivate them. The palm is in many places abundant. It supplies us with many valuable articles. The nut produces an oil which is used in cooking, also for light. The heart of the palm is itself a very good article of food, when dressed resembles in taste the Cabbage. The juice affords a very pleasant and refreshing beverage. When fermented it contains about as much spirit as Claret, say 8 or 9 to 100 parts. This island abounds with the palm. The Cocanut is also abundant. There are some trees near the Mission premises that produce between one and two hundred per annum.

* This applies mainly to Mr Wilson. Mrs Wilson has not had any chill or fever for a long while, tho she is affected otherwise by the climate.

After visiting several places on the Coast, South of the Gaboon, as far as D'Ambriz, and north to Cansico bay and the Nuna and Mundah rivers, we determined to locate our Mission on Cansico island. This island is about 60 miles from the Station at Gaboon. It is convenient to two fine rivers extending into the interior, and an extensive region of Coast. It is about 12 or 15 miles in circumference, and contains a couple thousand inhabitants. Here we commenced early in July to erect the buildings for the Mission. After having a small one erected we moved to the island on the first of August, and we now hope to have our house completed when the wet season commences, which is generally about the first of October. Our house is erected on a scale much larger than necessary for our own accommodation, in the hope that we will, ere long, have some of our brethren from home to join us in our labours.

The natives of Cansico are an interesting people. They had, ~~centuries~~ perhaps a century ago, been driven by wars from the main land, and taking possession of this beautiful and fertile island, they have never grown tired of their choice. Being superior in skil and tact to their neighbours of the main land, they became their factors in trade. And

of these things. They talked long among themselves, each one giving his opinion. The interpreter told us some of their views. One said, "How can we not love Missionary from we heart. Suppose there he one man away far far bush. Be dark, dark rain, night! He is muggy and wet, & him no sabby which way for go, him heart burn him plenty because him he all alone, and plenty bad thing live for bush. But no long one man come for him. He look him with light, he take him home for him house, give him eat, give him drink, give him fire, then him heart he very glad. That he all same as we. We be them man for dark. We be black man we no sabby God's book. How can we no love missionary the most." When they were informed that it was our intention to locate somewhere not far from them to teach the people always about God. They said, "We no be fit for believe them thing, it be too good for me. We no think you come."

At Gondi, an island about 20 miles up the river, we spent some time, & on our second visit we spent the Sabbath. Abadi the chief is rather an extraordinary personage. He showed more thought and clear sound judgement in answering questions put to him, than any other native I have met with on the Coast. When asked if the people believed there was a God he said "The man who said there was no God had lost his head." And he gave us an

instance of a feat which he supposed was incontrovertible proof that there was a God, and a divine providence. Pointing to a man who was present he said that once he had been taken captive. That so great was his love of liberty he understood to escape, ran off. The people to whom he belonged were enraged and determined to kill him. He was accordingly pursued and overtaken. He took shelter on a narrow eminence which terminated in front of his path in a steep and lofty rock. And the very front of this he was pressed. The front of the precipice was covered with bushes, but beneath lay rough broken rocks upon which to fall would be death. As his enemies approached with their uplifted mines, he said to himself "I can only die", and plunged over the giddy height. All sense he says was gone. He caught upon the bushes, was turned like a wheel in the air from rock to rock and from bush to bush, till at last, filled with surprise and wonder at his escape, he found himself safe and sound without a scar or a wound, in the vale below. "Could he" asked the venerable old Chief, "Could he have done so had not God helped him? He gave us also other instances of narrow escapes from imminent death which he thought proved the existance and overruling providence of God.

We told Abadi about the Sabbath. He said his people he thought would like to keep it. "But," said he "Which way we Sabby when he come?" We then showed him to tope a little stik, just as he would count billets of wood, and mope one notch for the first day, and so on, till the Seventh, when he should quit work, and keep the Sabbath. He said for his part he and his wife could do it, but he did not think the other people would. He expressed a strong desire to have a missionary come to live with them. He was taught also the nature of prayer. That God was every place, was very good and willing to hear prayer, and when told it would be proper for them to ask God to send them a Missionary to teach them his word, & his Sabbaths they promised that they would ask God do so. In all the towns in which we preached up the Mani, we were much struck with the seriousness of the people in prayer. When told that God is every place, and present, that he hears us when we talk to him, & that we intend to ask God to do them good, they are immediately serious. They bow their heads in silence, and although they cannot understand a word we say, yet they seem to have some knowledge of the solemnity of the exercise. In every place the desire for the Missionary was the same. All asked for the Missionary and when he was going to come. In some places they besieged us for a book to show that the Missionary would come to them from big

America. A little scrap of paper on which you write any thing is called a book. So we have written in several towns "books"; or promissory notes binding ourselves to do all in our power to procure a missionary for them. These books they will keep with the utmost carefulness. They will regard them as almost sacred, and who can tell how happy they would be to have them redeemed! May we not venture to hope that some of you, dear Brethren, will redeem them? Should you come to Africa and visit Mavi, and Gando, or Mangani they will be presented to you very soon.

The desire for Missionaries we repeat is very strong among this people. You will not be deceived by supposing that this arises from any proper notion of what a Missionary is, or what is the high and heavenly nature of his work. They conceive of a Miss[y] as a very good man. They can trust him, and have great confidence in him, when they cannot trust one another. They suppose he is a much superior being, has the true religion, and loves them and wishes to do them good. They expect too, that he will be of great temporal advantage to them. He will induce ships to anchor where he lives and thus bring them trade. He will also have houses to build, and will give them plenty of work for which he will pay them cloth. And more

than all it gives them a name in their own country and they esteem it a great honour to have a Missionary in their town or vicinity. Hence the strong desire and the emulation which is manifested on this subject. The greatest attentions, kindnesses, and ingenuous flatteries will be employed towards newly arrived Missionaries to induce them to locate in a particular place. While we remained at the Gaboon we had almost daily visits from chiefs requesting us to come and live with them. This feeling sometimes became so strong as even to prove troublesome to the Missionary. Half way between Gaboon and Cameroons Island, lives King Dambo. He was formerly a warm friend of Mr. Wilson. His son was for sometime and is yet in the School at Baraka. Mr. Wilson, once gave Dambo a "hook" promising that he would use his best endeavours to send him a Missionary. This hook Dambo built very much upon. It had the power of procuring him a Missionary from big America. On our first visit to Cameroons bay & the Mimi we lodged with Dambo. The "hook" was at once presented, and on the ground of it we were claimed as his. Bro. Wilson who accompanied us, endeavoured to explain the hook as a promise only, and also to show him that he had no power to place us in his town, besides he told him that he had already a catholic Missionary, and asked him why he wished for another? Dambo, who could not be put off in this way, came to see us afterwards at the Gaboon, & tried to prevail upon us to settle in his town. Time after time he sent for us, till

at length he found we were determined to locate on the island beyond his place. This offended him very deeply. He sent for his son to Banaka, declared himself no longer Mr Wilsons friend, nor the friend of the Gaboon people whom he supposed, because they had many wives from Cavisco, were acessary to our locating there. He also gave us to understand that we should never lodge any more in his town. This last was much to be regretted, because we had to stop there the first night always on our passage from Cavisco to the Gaboon. In the dry season the winds are regularly such that we can pass from the Gaboon to Cavisco in about 7 hours in a good boat, but from Cavisco to Gaboon, we cannot make it until the second day. So that we are compelled to be out one night. This night we must either spend upon the water in a rocking boat, or in Jambo's town. The next trip downward was made by Brs. Mackey. They arrived at Jambo's about 11 o'clock. Jambo would not use as formerly and give him lodging. Another native, however received them for the night. In the morning Jambo showed himself very angry. He was told that it was very unkind, & inhospitable to treat a man, whom he had at first received as his friend, in this way, but he could not be made to understand that we were under no obligation to settle there. The next trip to Gaboon was made by myself. Early in the evening we made the land near Jambo's, not intending

however, to lodge in his town, but to procure some fire at a few houses near bye and lodge in the boat. Soon we were noticed by some stragglers and reported. The whole town was immediately in an uproar. They came flocking to the beach. The cry was raised to kill and eat our boat boys. This is African justice in war. When they have quarrel with one man of another town or people, they will kill any individual of that party they can find. We had, by this time, got into a little bay, outside of us lay a ledge of rock over which the sea was roaring and foaming in great fury. Our boys were alarmed. The night was pitchy dark. To lie here we could not; to go to sea was terrible, and to fall into the hands of raging Savages was still worse. Committing ourselves to the Ruler of winds and waves, we ordered the boat to head out, and buffet the waves. As we departed, the shore grew silent and we began to indulge the hope that we might push a little further along, & enter another little bay and anchor for the night. This we attempted to do, but just as we were about to "lay to," being but a few yards from the beach, a gun was fired from a rock immediately over our heads. With the sudden report, there arose from a hundred voices, males and females, a heathenish yell which reverberated and rang along the distant coast for miles. Every one was more or less alarmed, not knowing but the next moment

our defenceless lives might fall a sacrifice to the excited passions of this wild race. After however yelling for a considerable time, and perhaps losing sight of us in the dark, we were left alone in our weeping hut to smoke the rest of it during the remainder of the night. I soon covered myself up with my quilts, and depended by Him whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps enjoyed a few hours refreshing repose.

Fanko was sent for several times to come to Gaboon to settle this "Palaver", but he refused. He declared that nothing but an American Missionary coming to live with him would settle it. He afterwards ordered the Catholic Missionary to leave, telling him that he was the cause of our not settling there. His men attacked the Mission cattle, and killed some of them. The king of Cairco, Mbombi, (Mamby) sent him some threatening message about the matter. He also received a message from us, that if he should give us any further disturbance as we passed by from Gaboon we should report his case to the next American Man of War, and have the "palaver" set in American fashion. We have since had the pleasure to learn that his mouth is cooled, and we believe he is now ashamed of his conduct and will trouble us no more. If possible we will try to build a little preaching place in his town, and preach there every time we pass. How delightful it would be to have an American brother located there. We could then join hands all the way to the

Another 20 north of us at Batanga would enable us to join hands also with our Scotch brethern at Calebar, and our English brethern at Fernando Po.

There is a great desire, in the young especially, to learn. Some boys came down to learn to read from the opposite side of the island, walking 6 or 8 miles every day. I make the letters for them on paper as we are not furnished with books yet, and often teach them to read from a scrap of a newspaper. In no heathen land has the Gospel been more successful than in Africa. It is estimated that on the western coast of Africa alone there are about 8000 Christians except the Sandwich Islands there are about 60 Native Missionaries. Thus making the average number of Converts to each Minister of the Gospel nearly 1/3 more than the average number of Church members to the Ministers of any Church in the United States.

In all these representations we by no means wish to conceal the fact that this is a Heathen land, and that the native African is a degraded heathen. Neither do we wish to represent Missionary life here as an easy life. It has its trials and its discouragements, and its privations, but it also has its reward and its glory, and its crown of rejoicing.

The fever of Africa has been greatly exagerated. It is nothing like so severe as that which the first settlers of the United States suffered. The first Missionaries to India had to endure fever. The fever here rarely proves fatal. Many Missionaries who have come to this Country would not have lived long any where. I could tell the names of a score of such. All this together with all the results of imprudent, and rash

conduct is charged upon the fever. From the representations that have been made on this subject one would be led to suppose that if there was no fever in Africa the Missionaries here would be immortal! People die in Africa, and where do they not! Let it, dear Brethren, be remembered that the number of White men living on the coast in factories for the purposes of trade, are ~~many~~ ten for one Missionary, yes twenty! But who ever hears that it is imprudent to come to Africa to make Money! I conversed with a Cap. of a vessel, the other day, who told me that he had four crews on the coast at the rivers Gambia and Senigal in succession a few years ago. Each time he had to return to the U.S. manned by native Africans. But does Cap. Thurston relinquish the trade! White men do live here, Many enjoy as good health as they would any where in the world, and the Missionary may do good here, in laboring to build up the kingdom of Christ.

One great obstacle, I believe, in the way of men devoting themselves to the salvation of Africa is a secret prejudice grounded upon the colour of the race. Whenever this exists in so strong a degree as to make a man reluctant to preach and teach the Gospel to Africans, it is

most certain that he would not enjoy the work of the Missionary in any part of the world. When heathen are compared with heathen colour is but a small item. The darkness of the skin does not render the African more loathsome and repulsive than than other heathen

The fact is, Brethern, "that in order to become all things to all men, we must have our own minds deeply convinced, that in the sight of God, and compared with eternity, the difference between the most polished and the most civilized people as to manners and customs, in which truth and duty are not immediately concerned, is a matter of very little consequence. This, and this only will ennable the Missionary, unaffectedly and cordially, & without constraint to associate with the African, so as to gain their respect, acquire their confidence, and win their affections."

There is one respect in which God has prepared this country for the Gospel which is very observable. Notwithstanding the African is a very religious being, yet his confidence in his own superstition and it almost obliterated. There is not a native here who will not laugh at his own fetish when you tell him that it cannot keep itself (much less keep him. Thus are their minds as it were vacated and open to the reception of the truth. Not only so but they are prepared against the inroads of Romanism. Catholic missions have had no success here in

modern times. They have, indeed, hung up their crosses and pictures in the houses of the people, and upon the necks of their children, but these trinkets only take the place of the Fetish in the African mind; and he ever conceives but little respect for the men who imitate his religion.

Thus has God opened a wide door for the Church to do good in Africa. The African's regard for the white man—his great desire to obtain his knowledge, and his religion—his kind and friendly disposition toward him—his disregard for his own worthless fetishes, all unite in urging us to pour in speedily the light of the everlasting Gospel upon these people. And who can tell how rapidly this light may spread! The day may not be seen by our eyes yet it will come, in which "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God" How aptly descriptive is this prophecy of the ardent nature of the African mind when aroused by the truth and awakened by the spirit of God. By nature the African possesses the principal of religion in a high degree. When you tell him about God he feels reverence—when you tell him of death and the Judgement he feels fear—When you pray or talk of the presence of God he feels awe. Suppose this mind be enlightened and sanctified, with what an ardent flame will it rise to God. Give her the Gospel and soon Africa will stretch forth her hands unto God.

Brethren we have a wide field here, and we

need help. Ours is but a drop in the vast ocean of influences which God will doubtless raise up in due time for the salvation of Africa. What are we among so many. The harvest is truly great and the laborers are few Remember us dear Brethren and inquire of the Head of the Church Whether you may not come over and help us. Our house and our hearts stand ready to receive you, and thousands of our fellow beings, partakers with us of a fallen but immortal nature, and who are perishing for want of the bread of life, to welcome you with pleasure to their shores.

Yours in Christ

G. W. Simpson